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# **Acoustical Modeling**

I've used acoustical modeling for years in my practice, starting out with physical models, investigated with light and sound. For the last six years or so, I have been using the computer-modeling program EASE. Modeling is a powerful tool, increasingly powerful. But like all tools, it has its limitations.

Here is a (pre-digital) photo of a model using light, as well as sound waves to model the inside of an auditorium. (Click to see enlarged versions of all the graphics.)



H.S. Auditorium looking from stage to audience

#### Models serve several purposes:

- The process of building a three dimensional model of a room, gives me hands-on understanding of the room beyond what I get from looking at drawings.
- I use models for acoustical calculations, such as reverberation time, clarity, speech intelligibility, noise levels and loudspeaker coverage.
- Models allow me to visually inspect how sound behaves in the room, using ray tracing.
- Using auralization, I can listen to how model sound behaves in the model room.

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Architectural acoustics consultant and orchestral musician Brooks describes the fundamentals of acoustics and the factors to be considered when constructing a room or building with good sound quality. Aimed at practicing architects and the interested lay reader, the guide covers topics such as... Read More...

All of these tools allow me to experiment with and compare options as I try to work out the best approach for each individual project.





Loudspeaker Coverage in an Auditorium

#### **Auralization**

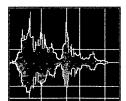
The ultimate goal of acoustical modeling is to model sound in the room so that you can hear it. A computer model can't really allow you to hear how the finished room will actually sound. It is, after all, a model; and there are many differences between real sound and modeled sound.

- Real sounds are pressure waves in air. Sound is modeled as rays or mirrored sources.
- Real sound bends around objects (diffraction). Work is being done on diffraction, but it is not fully incorporated into practice.
- Real surfaces diffuse and scatter sound. Although scattering is included in the model, data on scattering is scarce.
- Real sources have dimensions. Model sources are points. A real orchestra, for instance, is spread out over a large plane and comprises many instruments, each with its particular directionality, and each moving around as it is being played. Model sources are directional, but they don't move about as real sound sources do.

Physical scale models have fewer of these limitations since they use real sound. However, physical models are vastly more expensive to build and test than computer models.

The limitations on computer modeling are being stretched by researchers in what is perhaps the hottest field in architectural acoustics. Of course the most that anyone can wish for would be an equivalence between modeled sound and a recording of sound in a real space. That would be amazing, but of course nothing can compare with listening to real performers in a real space.

Isn't that why we build them?



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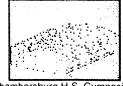


Calvary UMC









Chambersburg H.S. Gymnasium





Multi-purpose auditorium



# **Orpheus Acoustics**

925 Virginia Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603 - USA Phone: (717)291-9123 - Fax: (215)689-3713 - Email: cnb@orpheus-acoustics.com

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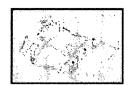
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Click on the picture to enlarge it.



Watchung H.S. Auditorium

П

# Ray Tracing

Another use of acoustical models is to study the behavior of sound in rooms using three-dimensional ray tracing. The model generates a series of rays from the sound sources. One can see how sound propagates in the room, reflecting off surfaces as it travels from source to receiver.

Here are rays illustrating sound waves moving through an auditorium. This illustration shows only the first several rays. After a very short time, the entire room is an impenetrable mess of sound rays. This technique is fascinating, but takes a lot of practice to make any sense of.

# Orpheus Acoustics

925 Virginia Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603 - USA Phone: (717)291-9123 - Fax: (215)689-3713 - Email: <a href="mailto:cnb@orpheus-acoustics.com">cnb@orpheus-acoustics.com</a>

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?) AND ((SOUND) OR NOISE)(2N)(CONTROL? OR ABATE?))) NOT PY>2000

RD (unique items)
show files

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Dirwos

> Set Files all
> Select (auraliz? and (whatif or (what()if) or what-if) and ((desire? ? or goal?
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No databases have items, of 566 searched.

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SELECT (AUDIOPTIMIZATION OR AUDIOOPTIMISATION) NOT PY>2000 RD (unique items)

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